SYNOPSIS

FACTORS INFLUENCING RURAL TOURISM MARKETING

IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

Submitted to

Alakh Prakash Goyal Shimla University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Award of Degree of Doctorate of Philosophy in Management

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CERTIFICATE-I

This is to certify that the Research Synopsis entitled FACTORS INFLUENCING RURAL TOURISM MARKETING IN HIMACHAL PRADESH has been submitted to School of Management, ALAKH PRAKASH GOYAL SHIMLA UNIVERSITY In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Management of this university. To best of my knowledge no part of this Research Plan has been submitted for any degree or diploma anywhere in or outside India and the academic assistance received during this course of plan and course of literature and sources of literature have been duly acknowledged.

Place:

Dated:

Supervisor

Dr. Anil Kr. Pal

Certificate –II

This is to certify that the Research Synopsis entitled Factors Influencing Rural Tourism Marketing In Himachal Pradesh has been, submitted to School of Management, ALAKH PRAKASH GOYAL SHIMLA UNIVERSITY

BY ABHINAV VERMA, Enrollment No.19001255 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Management of this university. The Research Synopsis has been approved by the Research Development Committee(RDC) in its meeting held on dated----------.

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INTRODUCTION

"Tourism can be defined as the arrangement of the holidays and recreational services for the tourists – as per Oxford dictionary." Tourism has been considered as one of prime activities promoting peace, adventure, seek novelty and recreating world of experiences. Tourism is regarded as most basic and one of the most desirable activities in the world. Not only promoting peace and tranquility among the people, tourism plays a vital role in providing employment opportunities and contributing to the economy. As per (UNGA) United Nations General Assembly, tourism contribution to the world's GDP and economy is second to oil and minerals. Thus, each and every country today has been promoting tourism to the very best, as to boost their economies and also end the problem of unemployment (Kumar and Shekhar, 2020). Along with promoting economy and employment opportunities, tourism plays a vital role in exchange of idea, values and culture. It is necessary for socio-cultural development and brings in growth of opportunities. India just like any other country has significantly worked on the tourism lines. India is also blessed with some of the most remarkable places contributing to the tourism lines (M and AK, 2016).

India over the time has become famous with the travel and tourism perspective due to its rich and vast cultural heritage, its art and culture, geographical features, historical monuments, beaches, forests and leisure and recreational places. Tourism in India has been flourishing and it has been continuously generating employment and earning huge foreign exchanges thus stabilizing the nation's economic development. India has vast tourism resources covering urban and rural perspectives (M and AK, 2016). Northern India has largely contributed to India's tourism capacity with states like Himachal Pradesh, Uttrakhand, Punjab and UT's such as Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Chandigarh. The tourism in Northern India has an element of both leisure and adventure with recreational areas, adventure activities, religious places and much more. Out of all the northern states and UTs, Himachal Pradesh has been contributing to the tourism lines significantly since its inception.

Himachal Pradesh predominantly a tourism state has all the features and characteristics to host variety of tourism in the world. It has religious hotspots covering holy shrines of Lord Shiva, Buddhist monasteries, temples of Maa Durga and other deities as well. Apart from the religious

circuit, Himachal is blessed with nature's beauty with prime locations like, Shimla, Manali, Rohtang, Lahual Spiti, Dharamshala, Dalhousie, Khajjiar, Bir Billing, Mandi, Chail, Narkanda, Chansal with rivers, valleys, hills, lakes, mountains offering adventure tourism at all seasons. One can trek to the pristine mountain tops and passes enjoy river rafting, paragliding, skiing, water sports, camping and much more. Along with the adventure tourism, Himachal offers leisure and luxury tourism experiences with 5 star properties such as Oberoi's, Radisson, Taj, Pristine group and much more. Himachal Pradesh, apart from this offers a taste of art and culture, traditions, national and international fairs and festivals and cuisine tourism. Along with this what makes Himachal stand apart is its rural tourism (Parmar, 2012). International tourists and national tourists all today largely prefer peace and tranquility which is offered to them via the rural tourism. Himachal Pradesh thus, is described as a place for all seasons and all reasons.

With the implementation of National Tourism Policy of India 1982 and 2002, there has been large scale upsurge in tourism in India especially Himachal Pradesh. There have been significant growth in incoming of the tourists both International and national to Himachal Pradesh. The new policy has led to development of socio-cultural and adventure tourism with rural areas being the prime focus (Kumar and Kanwar, 2018).

Rural tourism includes use of local natural resources, art and culture, traditions, local lifestyle, local cuisines of the villages, thus providing peace, serene experience to the tourists and also leading to socio-economic development of the rural areas. Himachal has been significantly promoting rural tourism from a long time has been successful in diverting much of the tourists to the rural areas by marketing strategies, various schemes and programs. Rural tourism in Himachal has been implemented with utmost care and sensitivity towards the ecological and environment aspects and indigenous art and culture of the local people. Rural tourism in Himachal is largely concentrated in the districts of Kinnaur, Lahaul Spiti, Shimla, Kullu, Chamba and upper Mandi and Lahual Spiti (Parmar, 2012). Out of these districts in Himachal Pradesh, Kinnaur, Lahaul Spiti, Shimla and Kullu carry the bulk of rural tourism in Himachal Pradesh. The districts have craeted a unique flavor of rural tourism by estbalishing ethnic village customs and traditions, art and architectures, fairs and festivals, values and their practices. These districts are rich in their traditions and also has significant historic-cultural heritage additional to wide natural resources

giving an edge over other areas of Himachal Pradesh. The landscapes are picturesque with cordial local which promote tourist activities.

The present research tries to examine the rural tourism aspects in upper Himachal Pradesh specially the districts of Kinnaur, Lahaul Spiti, Shimla and Kullu. The idea is to consider viable factors which influence the rural tourism and its marketing in India and globally. The research also tries to consider practical strategies, ways and methods and techniques to promote tourism in these districts, important factors promoting rural tourism and its impact. One of the most important aspects of tourism today is sustainable and eco-tourism practices and the research also critically determine the methods and scope of sustainable rural tourism. Rural tourism today has become a vital part to counter constant urbanization syndrome in respect to congested urban tourist spots (Singh, 2019). Besides all these, COVID 19 pandemic has also stagnated the tourism industry. Now, it becomes very necessary to again practice safe and sustainable tourism post COVID. The research also throws light on the measures and means to promote tourism activities and market them post COVID scenario and divert tourism activities to the rural areas. It also aims to increase the involvement of the local people, government, NGOs, local self help groups and companies for better implementation and execution of the rural tourism by devising strategies, plans and policies to adapt sustainable development and also become accustomed to the conventional beliefs and values of the modern world (Kumar, 2020). The idea is to create a middle path and strike a balance between the modern world and traditional aspect of the local people, thus giving an opportunity for the rural tourism to circulate.

Village or rural tourism is the future of tourism sector not only in Himachal or India but globally. It offers significant business and employment opportunities, thus offer a new scope for bread and butter earning expect agriculture and local handicraft work. Rural tourism besides all these allows exchange of cultures, faith, tradition and customs with a better understanding and acceptance towards humanity and life (Kumar and Shekhar, 2020). It not only devises a way to de-urbanize by providing employment in the rural areas itself but also allows developing and harnessing societal, educational, cultural and human values necessary for growth and development of humans. Since the rural tourism has a significant impact on the socio-cultural as well as the economic aspects of the locals it can thus be a way to develop and strengthen the rural population of the

districts as well the state overall. Rural tourism thus is an opportunity for local development as stated in the rural tourism scheme 2002-03 (Kumar and Kanwar, 2018).

LITERATURE REVIEW

(Shields and Schibik, 1995)

The study describes that marketing in tourism plays a very role. The curiosity of exploring new places among the tourists can only be fulfilled when a new place is marketed to them with its features, new sights and new experiences under new environment. This curiosity and need will ultimately grow with proper marketing of the place. WTO in international travel marketing defined tourism marketing as "a management philosophy which, in light of tourist demand, makes it possible through research, forecasting and selection to place tourism products on market most in line with the organization purpose for the greatest benefit". According to the researcher, marketing in tourism, helps the tourism to flourish and attract new potential clients by establishing effective and consistent communication pattern within the market. The researchers define marketing function in tourism industry is generally refers to as break through point which either will make a tourist place or break it. Tourism marketing generally includes all promotional activities both direct and indirect, which promote travel destinations among the potential customers. Tourism marketing can be defined as the systematic, synchronized and coordinated implementation of the business policy by tourism sector including all public and private ventures at local, regional, state, national or international level in order to accomplish the most favorable contentment of the needs and wants of particular consumer groups. The researchers thus clearly defines that marketing influences all the operations and functions of tourism.

(Hudson and Ritchie, 2006)

Researcher stated that the film tourism has grown significantly over the period of time and which can lead to direct promotion of the tourism destinations. The article also states the model how to exploit the film industry in tourism marketing prospects and opportunities. The researchers clearly

define marketing factors which can be incorporated which encourage the film industry and film tourists to visit the off-beat places and the destinations. In the article they defined four sets of marketing activities which can promote the destination in respect to the film industry. These were summed up by them as efforts to encourage film producers, actors, directors, film unit and studios in the area, generate enough media and buzz around the destination and film, market activities which directly and indirectly promote film and film locations and lastly establish secondary marketing activities which can influence large tourism potential. The film city can also be promoted and developed; shoot friendly locations can be marketed separately. Film tourism has loads of potential in Himachal Pradesh and even the government has started looking forward to it by making announcing the establishment of film cities in Dharamshala and Kullu areas.

(Li and Petrick, 2008)

The research synthesized the arguments on the future model of marketing. The researchers in their study determine three different marketing perspectives i.e. relationship marketing, services and the network approach, and the service. All these play dominant role in tourism marketing. The study also showed that tourism marketing must comply with new marketing thoughts, strategies and inhibit conceptual exploration in dept. In addition to the above, the claim of new marketing conceptualization on tourism research and its practices were also discussed. The study came to conclusion that the tourism marketing can be improved by focusing new principles of marketing specially by giving attention to the strategy research along with the conceptual thinking. Overall the tourism today needs to adopt new policy of being market oriented rather than being service oriented.

(Kwon and Vogt, 2009)

The researchers in their study examined the attitudes, opinions and the behavior of the locals in respect to place marketing and tourism. The study identifies the affective, behavioral and cognitive components of the locals have both positive and negative impact on the tourism, tourism practices and place marketing. The rural people due to less advancement, openness, orthodox approach along with less education and lack of awareness generally are tentative and protective towards their art and culture, traditions and environment which largely hamper the tourism industry. The research shows that the conceptual model of the local is largely based on their reasoned action,

social exchange practices and theories along with attitude towards the tourists and new thoughts and beliefs. The study was conducted by collecting the data at various locations at different levels and tourism development test was conducted based on Doxeys Irridex Model. The studies show that the society has both positive and negative attitude and behavior in place marketing. The people attaining personal benefits from tourism had positive outlook towards. Thus this can be formulated that the personal benefits if attained a moderate the negative attitude between three components towards the place marketing and tourism. The studies reveal that least developed countries were most positive and optimistic for tourism and tourism related social-economic growth as they are in the starting phase of tourism development. Whereas moderately developed nations were in second and still had mixed reviews but the developed nation residents were generally negative and expressed strong dislike towards tourists.

(Bing Pan, Zheng Xiang, Law and Fesenmaier, 2010)

The study conducted by the researchers' established the dynamic relationship between the search engines and tourism marketing destinations. The researcher defines search engines have become an important and integral part of online destination marketing. The travelers establish a dynamic relationship with the search engines and tourism destinations as they search for information about the places. Thus, search engines, meta-tags, SEM, websites and inline tourism domains have become an essential part of promoting the tourism destinations and activities. The study showed that there is two-fold synthesis between the traveler and the destinations through the search engines. They receive huge information via crawling, retrieving, indexing and unique algorithms via search engine results pages (SERP) via paid and non paid means and methods. Search engine marketing thus can be defined as the type of marketing strategy which uses internet to gain visibility on the SERP and supply information to the desired customer. This marketing have evolved over the time and with rise in the technology and incoming of 5G it becomes very essential for the tourism firms, government to market their products and services online via the SERP.

(Nam, Ekinci and Whyatt, 2011)

Their study establishes the relationship between customers and customer satisfaction which leads to mediating effect by increasing the brand equity, brand loyalty and affection towards the tourist site, their hotel and restaurants and services undertaken. The researchers conducted a sample study

of 378 travelers and used structural equation based on cordial staff behavior, ideal services, good quality lifestyle, brand identification, local behavior and peaceful environment. The studies show that the travelers had positive effects and were majorly satisfied which led to the constructive image building of the hotels and the destination in the travelers mind and were ready to come back soon to the same destination next time. The study also concluded that the consumer satisfaction is truly the forerunner of successful brand marketing and brand image. Thus the staff behavior, ideal self-congruence, societal impact how the locals behave and brand identification plays a significant role in tourism marketing and establishing loyalty among the travelers for the place as well the brand.

(Sánchez-García and Currás-Pérez, 2011)

They focused on the role of dissatisfied customer and post purchase behavior anger and regret. The researchers lay emphasis on the psychological aspects of the customers post services if they are dissatisfied they negatively market about the experience by complaining and spreading negative words in anger and regret. In the sample study of 359 restaurant customers and other 305 hotel users, they when left dissatisfied were emotionally triggered and spread negative reviews and complain about the product and services they undertook. This clearly shows that tourism is generally a social and psychological phenomenon and a philosophical perspective of the people. The researchers define tourism as of contemporary origin which is influenced by the people in cascading effect. Mouth to mouth marketing and social marketing plays a very vital role in tourism industry. Thus, meeting the client's requirement and satisfying them becomes very necessary but it generally is a complex phenomenon which requires skills of marketing mix.

(Parmar, 2012)

Tourism in Himachal has huge potentials and can be developed to its best only after the rural side of the state is optimally utilized by the state in tourism activities. Although the state is doing a lot to promote tourism but being through all the above literatures it has been concluded that a planned and defined marketing system is still lacking in respect to tourism marketing. Moreover, very few literatures have been found on Himachal Pradesh and tourism, although Himachal has become predominately a tourist state in the world. Also there has to be proper awareness in the rural areas

regarding the prospects of tourism, so that the community participation and capacity building works together for tourism development in Himachal and also sustainable tourism.

According to the researcher, Himachal Pradesh has had haphazard and urban cluster growth over the time which has resulted into the stagnation of tourism in certain urban areas. This is further facilitated by marketing of these few existing tourism destinations. Though the government has taken strong measures to promote and market tourism in Himachal Pradesh but these are only confined to urban clusters of Shimla city, Dharamshala-Mcleodgannj circuit, Dalhousie. This has resulted in urban-rural tourism gap along with seasonality gap in tourism in Himachal. The government although have established tourist information centers but these have been only at the urban areas which restrict the tourist to the urban destinations. The government has also failed to market the rural destinations via the social media, which has limited the tourists in the rural destinations. According to the researcher only 21.07% of total tourist who came to Shimla visited Rohru-Chansal valley, Narkanda valley and kotgarh-Thanadhar valley. This shows the lack of information and knowledge about these areas and tourist services being provided in the rural areas. Government though is working on the marketing front of the tourism. State tourism department markets the tourism industry through folders and files, brochures, literatures, documents, pamphlets and exhibitions. The state department has been using technology via advertisement through media, use of social media, conferences, documentaries, pictures, websites and through internet. But these practices only refer to the urban and existing tourist destinations, target only a few sections of society and neglect the rural tourism on the whole. The tourism industry in Himachal has largely underperformed due to under utilization of tourism destinations in rural areas. Tourism industry in Himachal as per the researcher still continues to be service oriented rather than being market oriented.

(Donyadideh, 2013)

The study defines tourism as per United Nations World Tourism Organization as a societal, traditional, cultural and economic activity which includes the movement of person from their origin place to different places, generally outside their local environment for recreational, business and professional purposes. WTO lists three types of tourists i.e. Domestic who travel within the country, Inbound, these are non-residents travelling in a particular country and Outbound, who travel from their origin country to other countries The researcher defines tourism in earlier times

particularly in the 17th century was defined as the ability of only upper or royal class to travel. With the passage of time the middle classes also started exploring the religious sites thus the practice of religious tourism started by the 18th century. With the establishment of world's 1st travel and Tourism Company Cox and Kings in 1758 and Thomas Cook in 1941, the routes of travel and tourism spread to the lower groupings as well. The mobility ear (1800-1944) saw developments of transportation services and communication which led to a significant increase of tourism activities to new locations both near and far away. In the 1st half of the 20th century business tourism started with the efforts of George Westinghouse. By 1950-1960's hotels, jet travels were introduced and became popular in the world giving an edge to the tourism industry. In the 21st century with the internet access new borders were opened and with the rise in social media and technology, different countries became the new fold destinations attracting potential tourist's (Bremner and Wikitera, 2016). Over the past few decades the tourism industry has seen enormous growth, thus leading to socio-cultural, economic and infrastructural development. Today, tourism is regarded as one of the most important national as well as global economic activity with the capacity for regional and local development from the grass root levels.

(Dolnicar and Ring, 2014)

The researchers define marketing is one of the most important and integral concepts of 21st century. Today every sphere of life, business and professional means require marketing. According to the researcher, marketing is one of the most complex and demanding works performed by every firm. Marketing is generally defined as process of converting and discovering the wants and needs into products and services by creating their demand in the marketing. The process of marketing being a psychological function starts even before the production starts and ends at satisfaction after the sales. The study concludes that marketing involves the process of exchange of the goods and services to persuade and satisfy human wants and needs. The marketing concept according to the researcher involves identifying; expecting, anticipating, inspiring, stimulating and satisfying customer's wants and necessities. In common terms marketing involve attracting and keeping customers by converting them into loyal clients by getting the right product to the right people, at the right place and at right time. According to American marketing association, marketing is defined as "Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of idea, goals and services to create exchange that safety individual or

organizational objective". The definition thus clearly suggests and defines; marketing is connected to planning, execution and implementations of four

(Ghatage and Kumbhar, 2015).

According to the researcher the rise on tourism sector relates back to 1966 with the incorporation of Indian Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC). Further, it was strengthened by National Tourism Policy 1982 which launched action plan and a blueprint for tourists' arrival-departure and their facilities. The main emphasis was done on urban sites, religious places and wildlife tourism. To promote tourism India established National Tourism Committee in 1988 which focused on public sectors to develop tourism to a large level both nationally and globally. The committee also focused on the role of states and UTs of the nation to contribute. The report by then also laid emphasis on urban tourism and its development by providing employment opportunities, preserving environment and national heritages. The policy was success and it raised the share if India in world tourism sector from 04% to 1% in just 5 years. Further, the government can up with the National Tourism Policy 2002 which laid focus on employment generation, capacity building and for the 1st time emphasized on rural transformation in India by promoting Rural Tourism. The policy was advised to take advantage for human as well as natural resources in the local spheres thus promoting tourism globally and emphasize on global trade transactions via tourism. The researcher concludes that overall the 2002 policy was devised to not only promote urban tourism but also propagate rural tourism and focus on rural areas by creating forward and backward connections and linkages with for overall socio-cultural and economic development of the nation.

(M and AK, 2016)

In the study conducted, different aspects of tourism and tourism business has been discussed as per the Indian tourism industry. He focuses on the role of tour operators and travel agencies in tourism business and its promotion worldwide. In the book he laid out the various set of management practices along with monitoring policy, implementation, promotional activities, marketing strategies and communication channels which can promote the tourism sites nationally and globally. He also laid focus on role of government, government organizations, local bodies,

private firms, local community and international bodies to develop suitable tourism sites and market them directly and indirectly by devising dynamic tourism policies and means.

(Amutha, 2016)

In the study the researcher states that India over the time has become world's top tourism destination contributing to significant societal as well as economic changes not in the urban areas but in the rural areas as well. India's stance on promoting tourism was also made clear when in 2014 it started electronic visa under the project "ultimate tourist spot". The present government has also allowed 100% FDI to set up International hotels and hospitality business ventures in India, which will allow international hotel chains to bring expertise and develop economies of scale of the nation. The states have started to come with their own Tourism plans and policies which is further promoting tourism in India. States like Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Uttrakhand and Himachal Pradesh have been promoting tourism largely from past few decades. The researcher concludes that growth of tourism sector overall has made India 3rd nation behind USA and China in the WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council Power rankings. One of the significant contributors of tourism in India is Himachal Pradesh.

(Hazra, 2018)

India is an enormous and diverse destination bordered by 7 different countries not to mention the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. The researcher in his studies clearly defines that there has been a tremendous change in the scenario of the tourism sector in the country where India was initially seen as a poor country with beggars and snake charmers to now a place with creative burst of cultures, races, religions and has placed itself into one of the top ranked countries to visit by foreigners. With a rich heritage and several attractions, India is a mosaic of multicultural experiences and is important for the country's economy and is growing rapidly. The study shows reports from United Nations World Tourist Organization, that almost 6.8% of India's GDP and foreign exchange of $18.13 billion dollars accounts from tourism in India. It also stated that travel and tourism sector generated Rs. 14.1 trillion in 2016, also it created around 40.3 million jobs and generated a lot of employment to the nation. According to a survey conducted by FICCI Federation

of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, India has a very bright future in the tourism industry. The study concludes that the tourists can choose and enjoy a variety of tourism including eco tourism, cultural tourism, wildlife tourism, heritage tourism, adventure tourism in India making it the go to destination of the world.

(Kumar, 2018)

The researcher describes that Himachal is predominantly an agriculture state but has been bestowed with numerous resources which are necessary for the fulfillment of tourism sector. Himachal is endowed with cultural and geographic diversity, magnificent environment, sacred shrines, ancient holy places and historic monuments which promote all kinds of tourism from leisure, adventure, religious, historic, business, cuisine and medicinal as well. Since the inception of Himachal as a state, tourism contribution has significantly risen from 0.78% in 1958 to 2% in 1967 to 6% in 2018. The rise in the tourism activities largely is contributed to the working to government. From establishing a separate department in 1958 to 1967's tourism and civil aviation and department of tourism, Himachal tourism is being promoted since the 2nd five year plan. The major work of the government in promoting tourism was done by establishing Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation in 1972, the nodal agency of tourism activities in Himachal Pradesh. This led to the formulation of state's 1st tourism policy in the year 1991 laying focus on the urban prospects of tourism in the state. Further two more tourism policies were drafted in the year 2000 and 2005 emphasizing on rural tourism as well as sustainable tourism along with employment generation and local area development.

(McARTHUR BAKER and UNNI, 2019)

The study defines tourism as an essential part of livelihood as it has become one of the most important sources of income for many countries. Tourism today has become of the fastest growing industries on the world and is the largest as well. The impact industry is twofold. It not only leads to the development of nation's socio-cultural aspects, economic prospects by providing business opportunities and creating employment opportunities. It also broadly creates harmony and peace by giving us the ability to understand life and human values by exchange of ideas, values, creating the feeling of trust, faith and respect for the diversity of cultures and different ways of life Tourism today has evolved from just sightseeing and luxury to experiencing new cultures, art and

architecture, values, adventures, life styles and the environment, all leading to the feeling of tranquility and joy in the lives of tourist as well the people offering tourism activities.

(Singh, 2019)

According to researcher rural tourism in Himachal has largely been neglected by the locals as well the government because of rich agricultural and service sector. Himachal has been blessed with conducive climatic conditions, irrigation means and rich and fertile soil which leads to significant amount of vegetables, fruits and farm produce making Himachal an agricultural based economy. Along with this, the literacy rate in Himachal has contributed to rich employment in the services sector both public and private. All of these coupled with orthodox society of the locals and difficult terrain, have led to the under development of the rural tourism in Himachal Pradesh. He concludes that districts in Himachal like Kinnaur, Lahual Spiti, Shimla, Kullu, Chamba, Lahual Spiti are bestowed with unexplored rural beauty which still have not been fully and potentially used. There have been significant problems of marketing, facilities at the places which have led to the downfall of rural tourism in the state. Despite these, Himachal still has been above the rest of the states in rural tourism. The districts of Kinnaur, Lahual Spiti, Kullu, Shimla and Chamba have largely contributed towards rural tourism in Himachal Prdaesh. Villages in these districts such as Naggar, Tosh, Garahan, Jibhi, Banjar in Kullu, Rohru, Dodra-Kawar, Kotgarh-Thanadhar, Narkanda, Deoti in Shimla, Sangla, Recong Peo, Pooh, Nako, Chitkul in Kinnaur and Keylong, Dhankar, Tabo, Tandi in Lahual Spiti have been up there in the maps of the tourists since couple of years. State government has largely worked for the rural tourism with its new Tourism Policy 2019, with programs like “Har Gaon ki Kahani”, Home stay schemes, Village circuits and other programs. However, the researcher points out to certain issues still faced by the rural tourism in Himachal the prominent one being lack of consistency and the quality in hospitality and services provided, capacity building, communication, funding, accessibility, planning and most important marketing. Rural tourism in Himachal is in need of desperate and proper marketing in order to create robust and healthy tourism experience.

(Rewal Chugh, 2021)

The researcher in the study mentions that one of the major factors for the un-fulfillment of tourism capacity in Himachal Pradesh is lack of marketing strategies of the state and lack of focus on the rural aspects of tourism. Himachal Pradesh from few decades has been thriving on the few settings such as Manali, Shimla, Dalhousie and Dharamshala for its tourism activities. There has been cluster of tourists in these areas contributing to over usage, exploitation and urbanization of the areas and local resources. Tourists nationally and internationally are visiting these few places which have led to the stagnation of the tourism industry in Himachal. Himachal is blessed with exquisite beauty and landscape with scope to variety of tourism activities. Only thing is left to side with the rural tourism.

Rural tourism is defined by World Tourism Organization as the product of tourism that provides a tourist a vibe of personalized touch, taste and contact through villages and countryside experiences by allowing them to participate in the local activities and get a flavor of local lifestyle and customs and beliefs. Rural tourism generally takes place outside the normal tourist circuits which is less populated and offer a rich dose of natural environment offering peace and serenity. These rural tourism circuits are small sized which relate to raw experience, adventure, agriculture and individual self service. The rural settings are far away and generally do not occupy urban congestions and also the leisure tourism. In common words rural tourism can be defined as local tourism of a particular area with includes the local authorities, local people.The researcher here characterizes rural tourism as small scale firms and their working relationship with the nature and traditional ways of life. The rural tourism not only includes the elements of regional and local experience but offer diversity at each and every sphere. Rural tourism showcases one's rich history, cultural richness, art and architecture, local cuisines and adventurous activities. Rural tourism thus is multi faceted covering aspects of cultural tourism, farm tourism, medical tourism, adventure tourism, nature tourism and eco-tourism in the country-sides. Rural tourism largely promotes rural or local economy, provides business opportunities and boosts employment drives in the area. Rural tourism thus leads to local socio-cultural development along with the economic development of a particular area. It has large benefits for both the tourists as well the service providers.

IDENTIFICATION OF GAP

1. No specific study has been conducted regarding the factors affecting rural tourism in Himachal.
2. Study about perceptions both local community and a tourist about rural tourism in Himachal has not been taken.
3. Large focus has been attributed towards urban and sub-urban tourism destinations only.
4. Lack of extensive studies on perception of local people in economic and socio-cultural aspects in Himachal Pradesh.
5. Very few studies have been conducted to determine the satisfaction of tourists and local communities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

1. To study the marketing potentiality of rural tourism in Himachal Pradesh.
2. To assess the tourist perception and satisfaction regarding rural tourism in Himachal Pradesh.
3. To study the satisfaction and impact of the rural tourism on local community.

HYPOTHESIS

1. HA0: The factors influencing the rural tourism affect the market potentiality.

1.2 HA1: The factors influencing the rural tourism does not affect the market potentiality.

2. HB0: The identified factors have the significant effect on the perception of tourist regarding rural tourism.

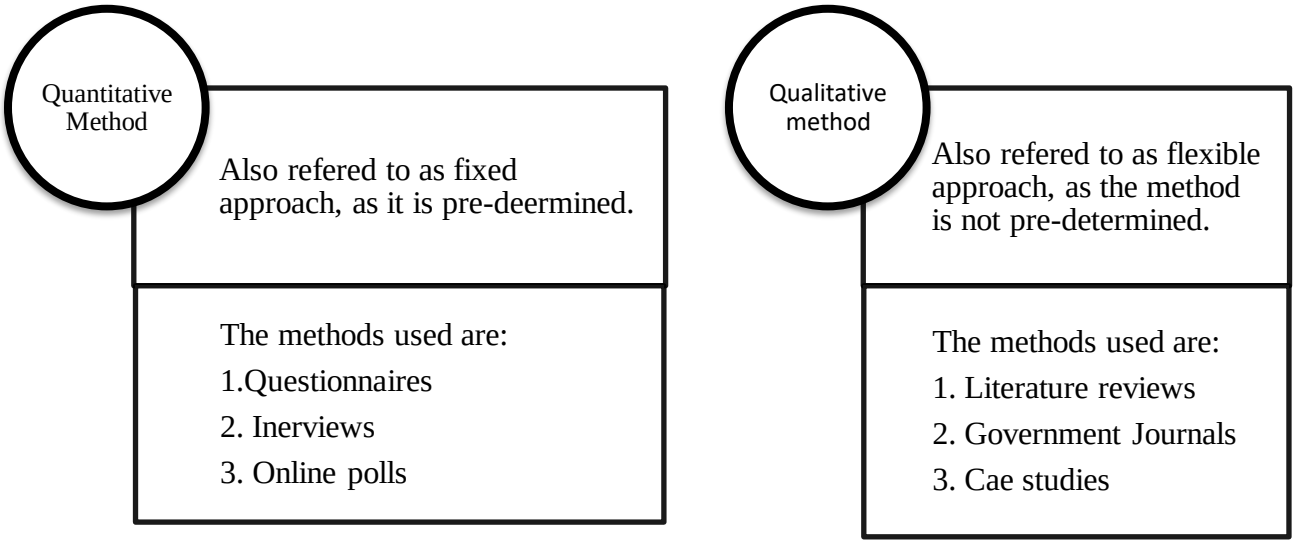
2.1 HB1: The identified factors have no effect on the perception of tourist regarding rural tourism.

3. HC0: The identified factors have significant affect on the perceptions of local community regarding rural tourism.

3.1 HC1: The identified factors have the no affect on the perceptions of local community regarding rural tourism.

RESEARCH METHOLOGY

Research design: The research design used is mix methodology. A hybrid form of research methodology will be undertaken in which both the qualitative and quantitative analysis will be conducted. To fulfill the objectives of the research the quantitative analysis will be conducted that will include the survey, questionnaire that will be distributed amongst tourist and non-tourist visiting Shimla, Kullu and Lahual Spiti.

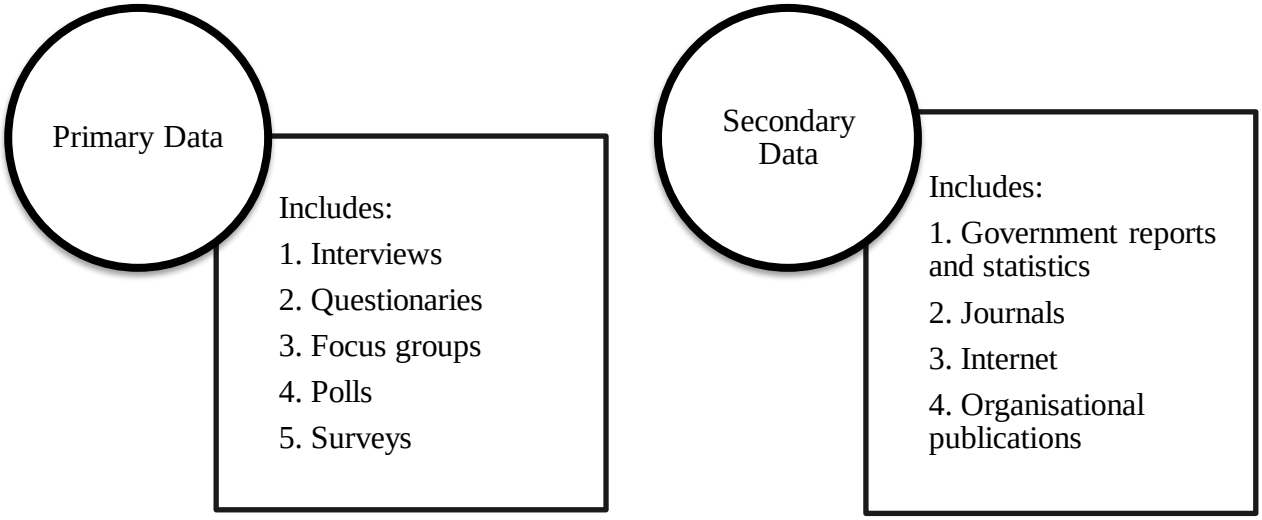

Quantitative Method
Also refered to as fixed approach, as it is pre-deermined.
The methods used are:
1.Questionnaires
2. Inerviews
3. Online polls
Qualitative method
Also refered to as flexible approach, as the method is not pre-determined.
The methods used are:
1. Literature reviews
2. Government Journals
3. Cae studies

Sampling: The sampling size would be taken around 400 numbers from 3 districts covering, Lahual Spiti, Shimla, and Kullu covering rural tourism in Himachal Pradesh. As the previous studies suggest most of the tourist visit these places for rural tourism and it will be easy to collect the data from the respective sources.

Sampling method: The sampling method used is stratified sampling and simple random as per the availability and accessibility of the populations.

Analysis: The analysis of the response of the questionnaire will be done on the basis of Likert scale ratings and the use of MS Excel and SPSS software.

Data collection: The method of data collection is both primary as well as secondary data.



PROPOSED CHAPTER PLAN

Part 1: Introduction

Chapter 1: Introduction

Part 2: Research Background

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Chapter 3: Gap Analysis

Part 3: Conceptual Design

Chapter 4: Research Design

Chapter 5: Research Methodology

Part 4: Data Analysis

Chapter 6: Data Analysis and Interpretation

Chapter 7: Discussion

Part 5: Conclusion and Recommendation

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Chapter 9: Recommendations and Suggestions

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